

Calvin Newton

This week's article is somewhat unusual in that I am writing about someone who sang gospel music but along the way made some mistakes and had to pay for his mistakes and is currently back singing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This person is Calvin Newton.

His music career begins, as so many folks do, by singing with his family. Calvin's father was a Church of God minister and had high hopes for his son to follow in his footsteps but Calvin had other ideas. Newton said that he had seen the hardships his father had gone through as a minister and he did not want to face those same hardships. While singing with his family Calvin had been a part of a radio broadcast on WEBQ out of Harrisburg, Illinois, so he decided that maybe he could be a gospel singer. His father wanted him to attend Lee College so he did for a while and this is where his singing career got a jump-start.

Newton stated that he was singing in a chapel program and was heard by the Dean of Music. He was invited to sing in the college quartet. Next he formed a group called the Kingsmen Four then came the big time and the job of singing Tenor for a group called the Melody Masters. Along with Calvin the other members were Jake Hess, James "Big Chief" Weatherington, Alvin Tuddle and Wally Varner. As you can see he was with what would some day be considered the best of the best. Next he joined The Blackwood Brothers, without question one of the most popular groups of all time.

In 1957 Calvin along with Bob Robertson and Don Butler formed a group called the Sons of Song. For a time this group enjoyed success like none other in gospel music. Their first album had six out of ten songs on the charts, something that no other group had accomplished at this time.

With this almost instant success came the problem of how to manage the business as well as the fame and fortune. Calvin by his own admission did not do a very good job in the management of his money and over time found himself involved in counterfeiting. As the story goes on he was caught and convicted of this crime and his payment for this crime was to spend time in prison, which he did. As you can imagine when he was released from prison no one wanted to have anything to do with him. As Christians we should not be this way but so many times we are.

By this time Bill Gaither was doing his thing with videos and Calvin contacted him with his story. Bill called Calvin and told him that his was a part of the gospel music era and that he should be including in telling the story of gospel music and as is said, the rest is history. Calvin is currently traveling all other the country singing for whoever will listen and he makes his home in Tennessee and can be reached at (706) 398-2822.

My thoughts on writing this article were twofold. One was, as always, to introduce someone who is involved in gospel music and second to, hopefully, let someone know that just because you make a mistake doesn't mean that God does not love you and that you can be assured that God will forgive you and give you another chance.

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